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**SMALL WARS? OR PEACE ENFORCEMENT
ACCORDING TO CLAUSEWITZ**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Peace enforcement operations (PEO) are a strategic response to unique phenomena that require an understanding of its nature. This paper examines current US doctrine of peace enforcement operations through the lens of Clausewitz's theory of war. It argues a more thorough understanding of the nature of intrastate war is necessary because that type of war is the most likely conflict requiring PEO. Additionally, the paper points out the need for a more integrated decisionmaking process that brings all elements of national power to bear on the conflict. The paper relies on both traditional and contemporary sources in examining the theoretical basis of peace enforcement operations.

SMALL WARS?
OR PEACE ENFORCEMENT ACCORDING TO CLAUSEWITZ

"We must not...send military forces into a crisis with an unclear mission they cannot accomplish -- such as we did when we sent the U.S. Marines into Lebanon in 1983. We inserted those proud warriors into the middle of a five-faction civil war complete with terrorists, hostage-takers and a dozen spies in every camp, and said, "Gentlemen, be a buffer." The results were 241 dead Marine and Navy personnel and a U.S. withdrawal from a troubled area." GEN Colin Powell¹

GEN Powell's analysis of the failure of the multinational force sent into Beirut to conduct peacekeeping operations possesses deeper insight than a cursory reading reveals. At the root of his comment is an uncertainty about the nature of the conflict. It is the nature of intrastate conflict and the manner in which the nation should respond to it that national decision makers misunderstood. Carl von Clausewitz wrote "No one starts a war -- or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so -- without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."² Our leaders failed to heed the warning of Clausewitz, written 170 years earlier, concerning the nature of war. While he specifically wrote about war, his insights are also applicable to the commitment of armed forces in peace operations, especially peace enforcement operations.

Peace enforcement operations (PEO) have become the matter of intense debate in the United States. Since the end of the Cold War the world has seen a host of conflicts arise in areas that had once been kept quiet as a result of superpower competition. World tensions have evolved into regional tensions in which conflicts rage mostly around ethnic and religious differences.

Our current national military strategy cites peace enforcement operations as one of the potential types of missions our armed forces may perform.³ However, we must understand that such operations are not merely another form of military maneuver or a police action. These operations are a strategic response to unique phenomena that require an understanding of its nature. The use of US armed forces in PEOs places those forces in circumstances that could result in armed conflict with one or more belligerent forces. Employing US forces in a PEO is, to paraphrase Clausewitz's view of war, the result of the continuation of US policy with other means.

The purpose of this paper is to examine current US doctrine of peace operations and, more specifically, peace enforcement operations through the lens of Clausewitz's theory of war. What role does Clausewitz's concept of the Remarkable Trinity play in committing US forces to such operations? Do PEOs possess positive or negative aims? How do we measure our objectives to know when we have achieved our end state? Are there other aspects of PEO that we have not yet identified that would affect any potential decision to enter them?

I will first review the theoretical findings of Clausewitz and challenge them with the thoughts of some modern military theoreticians in order to test his applicability to modern strategic issues. Then I will explore current US doctrine regarding peace enforcement operations. Then, to ensure Clausewitz's observations are relevant to PEO, I will examine the

strategic environment in which the US commits its forces. Finally, I will apply those observations to US doctrine to discover if PEOs have a sound theoretical basis or might be the application of power in pursuit of what amounts to be wishful dreaming.

Clausewitz Revisited

Any examination of the application of military power in the era of the nation-state must consider the thoughts of Clausewitz. His deep insights into the fundamentals of modern war have stood the tests of time and battle. Clausewitz's relevancy remains strong because of the theoretical process in which he analyzed war. His strong suit is at the strategic level where in his opus, On War, he addressed the need for national leaders to understand the nature and theory of war. History is replete with examples of nations that entered a war lacking full comprehension of why they did so. The price paid was in the needless loss of national treasury and life, and sometimes, national sovereignty. Additionally, Clausewitz's work is the only "truly great book on war."⁴ Many have criticized his writings but none have come close to replacing his theory.

One of Clausewitz's greatest contributions toward understanding the nature of war rests in his examination of the relationship among the three major factors that create the will and capability of a nation-state to fight a war. Clausewitz referred to this relationship as the Paradoxical Trinity, composed of blind natural force, chance and probability, and

rational policy. He further associated these forces with sets of actors -- the **people** of the nation-state possessing the energy for the violence associated with blind natural force; the **armed forces** that shape probabilities to its advantage; and the **government** that develops rational policy to which the other two should be servants. Clausewitz sought to convince his readers that they should enter into war only after a rational policy analysis had determined it was the correct thing to do. However, he also understood that what was rational at one point in time can become irrational when overthrown by chance and/or violent action at a future point.

Rational policy should define the desired political relationship between belligerents; however, Clausewitz did not describe the characteristics of such policy. He assumed that those who develop policy would do so with the best interests of the nation-state in mind. Clausewitz recognized that policy makers could err or use policy for private agendas but believed any discussion of this as something outside the scope of his work.⁵ Consequently, the clarity and appropriateness of policy are left to the standards of those making the policy. Clausewitz's warning is that policy ought to be the rational factor in the complex equation of war.

Among the many factors active in war, several operate outside the bounds of direct human control. Clausewitz referred to them as danger, exertion, uncertainty, and chance.⁶ Gaining some semblance of control over these climatic elements is the

duty of the commander. The commander must exercise his genius through creativity and rational thought, which can be very difficult even when the solution to the issue seems near at hand.

As the government develops its policy regarding an issue, it must decide its ultimate goal and the process required to achieve it. This brings us to the issue of **aims**, or the purpose of our actions. Clausewitz examined the concepts of the defense and attack in terms of purpose and characteristic features. He concluded that the defense is the stronger form of war because it seeks to hold and preserve what already belongs to the defender. Conversely, the attacker seeks to gain something that is not his. Any omission or delay by the attacker gives the defender additional strength. However, the attacker possesses the positive aim because he seeks to achieve an end, to seize the initiative, to gain his objective. The defender possesses the negative aim because he seeks to preserve the status quo, to hold what is already his and deny it to the attacker. Defense is the stronger form of war, yet it pursues a negative aim.⁷

Closely associated with the concept of aims is that of the **culminating point**. Nothing comes easily in war. As an attacker pursues his goal he expends his strength until he reaches a point of diminishing returns. This point is his culminating point; if he achieves his objective before reaching his culminating point, so much more is added to his credit. However, if he fails to attain his goal before reaching his culminating point, he must go

over to the defense. At this point he also transitions from seeking a positive aim to pursuing a negative aim.

Culminating points also exist for those in the defense. If one is already in the defense, his culminating point is extremely critical because once he reaches it he can no longer exist in a cohesive fashion. His forces will fracture and fall in a piecemeal fashion.

Clausewitz gives complete priority to the political dimensions of war. Political policy provides the impetus for war according to Clausewitz. His based his conclusion in the nature of the political world of his day, which had its genesis in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. That treaty ended the Thirty Years War in Europe and established the sovereignty of the nation-state as the basic element in world politics. As a result, Clausewitz saw the need for nation-states to avoid cutting themselves off from all forms of political contact with their belligerents. He purposely defined war as "...simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means. We...also want to make it clear that war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different."⁸

The supremacy of policy in the direction of war should determine the objectives of strategic military action. While not attempting to define the correct manner needed to set objectives, Clausewitz did comment on the relationship between the commander and his government. In those situations where the commander's force is part of a combined force and his government does not

have a vital interest at stake: "...he (the commander) is dependent only on his own government, and the objective the latter sets for him will be as ambiguous as its aims."⁹ Some observers recognize this ambiguity of political leaders as the hallmark and essence of politics. Thus the strategic military leader must strive to glean from his political masters the specific objectives they seek.

Throughout history three basic factors have characterized military objectives -- **seizing space, gaining time, and destroying the enemy's forces**. The pursuit of a positive aim, or the attack, normally capitalizes on seizing space and destroying the enemy. Negative aims, or the defense, usually seek to gain time and destroy the enemy's forces in the hope that at some future point the defender can go over to the attack, seek the positive aim, and gain the necessary objective. An understanding of objectives and aims is pertinent to any military operation including all forms of peace operations.

An example of the enduring relevance of Clausewitz was his recognition of the necessity of establishing conflict termination criteria. Besides aiding the strategist in deciding how and when a conflict should end, Clausewitz saw conflict termination criteria as an important part of deciding when to take a calculated risk. Today, conflict termination measures similar to the "unconditional surrender" applied to the Axis powers in World War II would not afford a victor the ways and means to establish a permanent peace. Weapons of mass destruction and the

increasing number of values-based conflicts involve high degrees of risk and make clear-cut victories a thing of the past.

Conflict termination challenges modern political leaders to clearly define the objectives toward which a nation should focus its elements of national power.

Strategically, the chosen aim, either positive or negative, will influence the nation-state's resources and abilities to respond to other political conditions. The specifics of accomplishing these aims are left to the national command authorities and the commanders in the field. Clausewitz admonishes in any case that the positive aim, resulting in the destruction of the enemy force, is the desirable military objective because.¹⁰ Any approach that seeks to maintain the status-quo cedes the initiative to the more active force, the attacker, thereby allowing him the opportunity to seek his positive aim.

Over time, other strategic thinkers, such as B.H. Liddle Hart and Martin Van Creveld, have attacked Clausewitz's theory. The Army leadership of today has expressed doubts about the applicability of Clausewitz. Much of their criticism is based on the notion that the future enemies facing the Army will be brutal criminals or mercenaries with allegiances to "anti-state" entities.¹¹ Some believe the concept of the nation-state has outlived its usefulness and will devolve into religious or ethnic based groups.¹² Van Creveld goes as far as to state that most military power is irrelevant in defending a nation-state's

political interests today. He believes many nation-states, including the US, lack either the political willpower or the military capability to engage in a conflict without resorting to suicidal escalation.¹³ In the end these critics foresee the death of the nation-state.

The obituary of the nation-state is premature. The belligerents in many of today's conflicts, often fighting for religious or ethnic reasons, still seek to form their own nation-state. Existing nation-states continue to act in ways to preserve their existence. The nation-state as we have known it since 1648 will continue to be the dominant political body well into the 21st Century. Belligerents fighting the many conflicts throughout the world are attempting to either form their own nation-state or hold one together.

While other theorists continue to have applicability to modern warfare, Clausewitz, the premier theorist whose logical approach and understanding of the primacy of policy over the military, continues to withstand all assaults. On War remains the standard for all theories of modern warfare because it provides a comprehensive attempt to understand the many complexities of human conflict. His impact can be seen in the works of many historians and strategists, ranging from Mao Zedong to Colin Powell, Samuel Huntington to Hans Delbrück. Such leaders in their respective fields found Clausewitz important, not because he gave them the "Truth" about war, but because he offered thinking leaders a framework with which to examine war.

Having established the theoretical framework for this study, it remains to examine the doctrine behind US peace operations and, more specifically, peace-enforcement operations.

Current US Doctrine

In 1993 President Clinton directed that an interagency working group review the nation's peacekeeping policies and programs to ensure they were compatible with the needs of the Post-Cold War world. The Clinton Administration formalized the resulting findings of this study as Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 25, a classified document introduced to the public through an unclassified executive summary.¹⁴

The first major finding of PDD 25 was the determination that peace operations are an important and useful tool for achieving US national security objectives. While not desired in every circumstance, in certain selective situations peace operations can be an effective tool. The study group recognized that successful peace operations require a multilateral approach, including US involvement. Active involvement also allows the US to exercise an influence over the operation. Additionally, the US possesses unique capabilities for peace operations, especially in logistics and communications, which other nations lack.

The PDD further states that "Peace operations should not be open-ended commitments but instead linked to concrete political solutions."¹⁵ An amazing admission by professional masters of ambiguity, the PDD authors nevertheless attempted to articulate end-state criteria. These include placing specific time limits

on a peace operation; a well-integrated plan involving both military and humanitarian organizations; a specified troop level; and a firmly established budget.¹⁶

Other recommendations of the PDD were to ensure US forces remain under US command, assist in reforming the UN's management of peace operations, improve the US ability to manage and fund such operations, and create improved forms of cooperation between the Executive branch, Congress, and the American public. One of the principal implementors of this directive, the Department of Defense, took steps to formalize the tenets, practices, and procedures for an increasingly complex range of operations, called military operations other than war (MOOTW), by publishing its doctrine in Joint Doctrine for MOOTW (Joint Pub 3-07).

In Joint Pub 3-07 the United States military officially recognized the paramount role of political objectives in planning and conducting MOOTW. Such operations use military resources to deter war, promote peace, and respond to crises threatening peace efforts. A wide range of potential operations falls within the scope of MOOTW including "peace operations." Peace operations include peacekeeping operations (PKO) and peace enforcement operations (PEO).

Joint Pub 3-07 defines PEO as "...the application of military force, or threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to restore peace and order."¹⁷ A defining characteristic of PEO is that it does not require the

consent of nation-states involved in the conflict. Additionally, the US intends to execute its strategies to stabilize a region and return it to peaceful conditions by skillfully combining both PEO and PKO.

Joint Pub 3-07 describes six principles of MOOTW that are extensions of the basic doctrine described in Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations.¹⁸ They are:

- 1) **Objective.** Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective.
- 2) **Unity of effort.** Seek unity of effort in every operation.
- 3) **Security.** Never permit hostile factions to acquire a military, political, or informational advantage.
- 4) **Restraint.** Apply appropriate military restraint prudently.
- 5) **Perseverance.** Prepare for the measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims.
- 6) **Legitimacy.** Committed forces must sustain the legitimacy of the operation and of the host government, where applicable.

The objectives of PEO are to demonstrate US resolve and capability, support other instruments of national power, or end a "situation on favorable terms."¹⁹ Additionally, these operations straddle the "singularly important threshold which may be crossed by use (or threat of use) of military force of any kind."²⁰ This admission of the dangers of PEO clearly recognizes it as an

operation through which the nation can be drawn into deadly combat in an era of violent peace. Whether such involvement is called "war" or MOOTW is left to the political leaders of the nation; but for the soldiers in the field and the airmen in the skies, the operation would be deadly in either case.

To adhere to the joint doctrine of MOOTW, the Army published its doctrine in Peace Operations (FM 100-23). Closely aligned with Joint Pub 3-07, the Army's focus is more at the operational planning and execution level of the PEO rather than on its theoretical basis.

Our current doctrine for peace enforcement operations runs counter to what has developed into our strategic culture. Carnes Lord describes strategic culture as the "traditional practices and habits of thought" practiced by a nation to organize and employ its military forces.²¹ It includes the expectations for success, which in the American context is to achieve military success in the shortest possible time. The American people believe that when its leaders employ their military forces, the positive aims should be rapidly attained, the forces brought home, and peacetime activities resumed.²²

Peace enforcement operations are relatively new to the US military. The real test of it as a doctrine occurs in the field. But what does the field look like today?

The Strategic Environment -- An Era of Intrastate Conflict

With the fall of the Soviet empire in 1992, the United Nations became the leading organization to conduct peace

enforcement operations in those conflicts best described as intrastate conflicts. Characterized by their unusual violence and cruelty, intrastate conflicts have accounted for 82% of all UN operations since 1992.²³ The breakdown of state institutions results in the rapid disintegration of the state's judicial and police functions. Armed civilians and militia, usually possessing poor discipline and nebulous chains of command, engage their opponents in a violent struggle. Civilians, traditionally considered as noncombatants, become targets for all belligerents. The destructiveness of intrastate conflict tears at every bond in society.

There are two key distinctions of intrastate conflict. First, one must remember that states and nations are not one in the same. **States** are sovereign political communities led by some form of government. On the other hand, **nations** are a body of people possessing a distinct cultural and social way of life. The combination of the two concepts forms the modern notion of the **nation-state**, a group of people with a distinctive cultural and social way of life participating in the political life of a governed community. While national identities are based on the bonds of the cultural or social way of life, the political nature of states are associated with the interests of their bodies politic. The primary duty of the government is to ensure the survival of the state and, to that end, it focuses on the state's **interests**. A nation's people achieve bonding among themselves through its social norms, mores, and cultural ties; in short, its

values.

Conflicts can generally be understood as either value-based or interest-based.²⁴ Value-based conflicts challenge the applicability of certain values to one of the belligerents, revolving around ideas and beliefs that in and of themselves have intrinsic worth to the combatants. These values tend to be nonnegotiable because negotiations imply the values have a worth that is not enduring and important. Racial and religious conflicts are examples of value-based conflicts between the forces of two or more national groups. Recent examples of value-based conflicts include the Bosnian civil war and the ethnic strife in Rwanda.

Interest-based conflicts involve the vital concerns of states. States traditionally maintain an outward focus when they scan their environment for threats to their interests. Once the state's leaders identify a foreign threat, its people are easily rallied to resist the threat and put internal squabbles and disagreements aside. A modern example of this can be found in the truce between the Chinese Nationalists and Communists in their resistance to the Japanese during WW II. With this understanding between values and interests, however, we cannot categorize a specific conflict as either only a value or interest based conflict. Rather, conflicts are a combination of the two. The rub is determining whether interests or values dominate the issue.

Among other things, intrastate conflicts are, as Clausewitz

believed, a "matter of degree."²⁵ They attack the very fabric of the nation-state, the values that bind the people together. The more that values are the crux of the contest, the more violent and difficult it is to end the fighting. This is not to imply that interest-based conflicts are not any less violent; rather, they rarely threaten the existence of the state in today's world. Value-based conflict, on the other hand, frequently pushes groups of peoples to the brink of extinction. When faced with that possibility, most people will stop at nothing to ensure their very existence. Many of today's conflicts are intrastate conflicts, usually of a religious or ethnic nature and involving unusually brutal levels of violence aimed at traditional non-combatants.²⁶ The use of military power in resolving value-based conflicts requires more time than required to resolve interest-based conflicts.²⁷ One only has to read the daily reports of brutal fighting in Burundi, Sri Lanka, Kashmir or Chechnya to comprehend the horrors and costs of value-based conflicts.

Clausewitz is instructive in these cases when one examines intrastate conflicts with the aid of his Paradoxical Trinity.²⁸ Composed of the elements of blind natural force, chance and probability, and subordination to policy, this paradigm can aid us in understanding the phenomenon of intrastate conflict. Blind natural force involves the "primordial violence, hatred, and enmity" that Clausewitz associated with the nation-state's citizens. He saw the commander and military possessing the necessary skills to take advantage of chance and probability.

Finally, the subordination of war's violence to the aims of policy was the fundamental responsibility of the government. Any analysis of conflict must review the roles of these three parts -- the people, the military, and the government -- if the analysis accurately portrays the conflict's nature.

Intrastate conflict weakens the role of the government and the military because of the institutional failures that are characteristic of this type of conflict. The role of the people dominates the conflict, injecting the passionate hate and violence that conflicting values create. The violence within the failed state is not ruled by a logic that focuses on the state's interests, but rather on the people's primordial lust for blood. Any review of history, beginning with the Old Testament and continuing through today, will reveal that mankind possesses a basic violent nature that societies control through societal laws, norms and mores. When a faction challenges these basic control mechanisms, the brutal nature of man takes command, subverting the proper governmental control of military power and placing it in the hands of the people, who are quite capable of senseless acts of violence.

A recent pronouncement by Anthony Lake, the National Security Adviser to President Clinton, spelled out the circumstance under which the US would be prepared to use its military power. Among the seven sets of circumstances were three in which the US would use force to "counter aggression," "preserve, promote and defend democracy," and "combat famines,"

natural disasters, and gross abuses of human rights."²⁹ This clarification of policy aligns our values with our interests. It also puts the US in the position of committing military forces to situations that traditionally feel outside the bounds of vital interests, those that the nation would be willing to fight for to attain its desired objectives. This new slant on committing forces raises a new challenge -- how well prepared is our doctrine to allow us to organize, train, and resource forces for these new missions? Specifically, when called on to stop the fighting in an intrastate conflict, save lives, and enforce the peace, is our doctrine sound in the view of Clausewitz?

Is our doctrine sound?

Peace enforcement operations essentially are small wars. The US Marine Corps coined the phrase "small wars" during the interwar years of 1919 - 1940 to describe their operations in Central America. The USMC published the Small Wars Manual in 1940 that defined "**small wars**" as:

"... operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory... as are determined by the foreign policy of our nation."³⁰

Contrast this definition with the definition of PEO found in Joint Pub 3-07, Joint Doctrine for MOOTW:

"... the application of military forces, or threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to restore peace and order."³¹

Neither definition is entirely appropriate for the realities of today's world. While the Marine Corps definition more

accurately describes the process in terms of national interests, the Joint Pub definition fits the internationalist tendencies of the Clinton administration, or for that matter any post-WW II administration.

A major point of contention is the issue of who authorizes the US to conduct a PEO. Under the Marine Corps definition, that authority was solely the US government; under the JCS definition, it remains under the US government but its motivation could be the result of an international mandate, such as those issued by the UN Security Council for operations in Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia. While it is appropriate for UN operations to include US military forces in UN mandated operations, the US government must make a clear case for such use. Lacking the support by one of the three actors of Clausewitz's trinity, the people as represented by the Congress, will ultimately lead to a failure.

The JCS definition fails to describe the comprehensive use of national power in PEO by limiting its scope to the application of military power. A major strength of the Marine Corps definition is its melding of both the diplomatic and military elements of power to achieve the nation's goals. End-state definition, conflict termination criteria, and international mandates require the involvement of our diplomatic experts. This serious deficiency requires immediate correction. For example, the lack of comprehensive control by both our military and diplomatic leaders greatly influenced our experience in Somalia.

Finally, a comparison of the two definitions leaves no doubt that the Marine Corps definition was well suited for a period when the US could act on its own without fear of retribution. In that era the US could intervene in another nation's internal affairs if it viewed that nation's conduct as inappropriate. For a variety of reasons, the US currently cannot conduct its foreign policy in such extreme fashion.

Traditionally, executing a PEO could constitute an act of war. Lacking a monolithic enemy like the former USSR that the free world could unite against, the US must not enter unilaterally into a state of war with another nation, short of defending our homeland, so as to avoid presenting itself as the aggressor. Only through an international mandate, such as one issued by the UN, can the US avoid creating the perception it is acting in a unilateral fashion to further its national interests. But how can the nation execute a combat operation without entering into a state of war? What are the differences between a PEO and a war?

Peace enforcement operations place the nation in a war because it has engaged another nation in a test of wills. In Clausewitz's terms, "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."³² In today's international environment, we seek to limit how much a belligerent is our enemy in a PEO context through the use of rules of engagement and UN sanctioned mandates limiting the use of force. To the soldier on the ground or the airman in the sky, the risks they take in a PEO far exceed

those of war in which exists a better clarity of purpose. In a PEO, just when does the belligerent stop being an enemy? Some might answer that the belligerents are never the enemy because the PEO force acts with impartiality, treating both sides the same.³³ It is foolish to believe that the belligerent bombed and shelled into ceasing its offensive operations will consider the PEO force as impartial; they will comply with our directions because we hold a hammer over them.

While both PEO and war attempt to force our will on an opponent, the creation of such national will is difficult. Peace enforcement operations are much more sensitive than war to political concerns, especially domestic concerns. Political leaders must convince their constituents that the nation has a compelling interest in halting the conflict. If the president believes it is in the nation's interest to conduct a PEO, he must form a coalition under whose umbrella the US can participate without suffering international condemnation as a meddling superpower. The president, acting as the commander in chief, must also determine the objectives, risks, and political costs of the PEO. Certainly, any decision the president makes must take in to account the domestic influences of the Congress and the people. One of the most pressing restraints the president must observe is the American strategic culture that historically has mandated quick resolutions to the issues requiring deployment of US military forces. Arguably, it is this sensitivity to domestic influences and our strategic culture that led the Clinton

administration to include specific time limits on any peace operation, including PEO, as described in its PDD 25.

A major objective of the PEO is convincing the belligerents the US does not seek the destruction of either side of the conflict. Policy makers and military leaders develop rules of engagement that are very restrictive and limit the military's ability to inflict damage on any opposition. The leadership intends for these restrictions to prevent military operations from exceeding the imposed political limits and possibly committing the US to a policy of decisively defeating its opponent. The policy makers intend the gradual application of military force to signal its opponent of a middle ground where compromise is possible.

A precondition for such compromise, however, is the cessation of fighting. Historically, this is a flawed approach in fighting a limited war, the type of war that includes PEO. Our national experiences in Vietnam and Somalia are examples of our inability to gradually apply military power against an opponent who cannot accept such gradualism. When an opponent has nothing left to lose, it cannot act gradually; it must fight a total war rather than a limited war.

Perhaps a better understanding of PEO begins with a new name for this type of operation. But whether called a small war, region stabilization, conflict supervision or a PEO, the nation must understand the kind of environment to which it commits its military forces in a failed state. Failing this, our leaders

would stand accused by Clausewitz for violating his first principle of exercising military power. "No one starts a war... without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."³⁴

Without a doubt, Clausewitz would commend PDD 25 and JCS Pub 3-07 for the emphasis both place on the role policy plays in PEO. The application of policy is the purpose of PEO and must have a significant amount of political guidance. In today's strategic environment, policy makers must maintain a constant watch over the conflict, assessing its daily situation. Based on their assessment, they may need to adjust force structure and the military objectives of the PEO. Just as important, policy makers may have to alter the tack taken by the other forms of national power -- diplomatic, economic, and informational.

The most effective method for such control within our form of government is an established interagency working group that functions throughout the lifespan of the PEO and its accompanying forms of other peace operations. However, to our detriment, our use of the interagency working group is reserved for extraordinary situations. Such groups tend to develop their cohesion and processes in the "heat of battle," leaving cracks through which very important details can slip. The US government should define the process of the interagency working group in PDD 25 to correct this deficiency.

The confusion of our current management methods for PEO creates a weakness that Clausewitz would criticize. Our

organizational weakness contributes to "friction," the "force that makes the apparently easy so difficult."³⁵ This friction drags on the execution of the PEO, causing it to lose initiative or momentum. Clausewitz surely would consider this a major area of concern of any PEO. From the military's perspective, the PEO retains a strategically negative aim because it seeks only to preserve the status quo. A PEO is basically a strategically defensive operation while being an offensive one at the operational level of war. In fact, when measuring a PEO's objective in the traditional sense, it seeks to gain time rather than destroy a strategic enemy force or seize ground. Policy makers must make good use of this time and further their goals through action with other elements of national power.

Policy makers also must be sensitive to the operation's culminating point. The nature of PEO tends toward sharp violent engagements at the tactical level while the operational level can be fraught with delays and changing priorities as a result of disorganized strategic direction. Windows of opportunity open because of successful tactical actions or negotiations. Operational level commanders try to link these actions in a way that fulfills the goals assigned by the strategic leadership. These windows can close as a result of delays, lack of instructions, or insufficient supporting action by another form of national power. Subsequent actions will fail to attain the desired end state because the PEO force will have exceeded its culminating point. Policy makers must ensure they do not allow

the PEO effort to exceed this point and diminish its prospect of success.

The public views peace operations, of which PEO are a subset, as exercises in altruism based on good will and compassion. Usually misunderstood by the public is that any action by a PEO force providing aid to a belligerent in a failed state is considered a hostile act by all other belligerents.³⁶ Throughout the duration of a PEO, commanders must attempt to maintain a degree of impartiality although our doctrine admits that degree will be low.³⁷

Despite our belief in altruistic action and attempts to maintain an impartial attitude, the force of reciprocity will exert an influence on the operational environment. For every action of ours, there will be some form of reaction by the involved belligerent forces. Clausewitz referred to this as the "Property of Positive Reaction," one of the three major characteristics of military activities.³⁸ Decision makers must remember that belligerent forces in a PEO will react to our operations, such as the Bosnian Serbs did during the bombing phase of the NATO PEO in 1995 or the Somalis reacted to UN nation-building efforts in 1993. Plans for PEOs must include branches that will account for the inevitable reaction.

Knowing that we should not expect a PEO to turn out as planned, we have constrained ourselves by officially placing a time limit on the length of our effort. Clausewitz would rebuke PDD 25 on this point because it fails to provide for

perseverance. As he wrote "...there is hardly a worthwhile enterprise in war whose execution does not call for infinite effort, trouble, and privation; ... only great strength of will can lead to the objective."³⁹ Joint doctrine cites perseverance as a principle of PO/PEO, yet PDD 25 refutes it by stating that peace operations must have limited timeframes. PDD 25 attempts to guarantee domestic success up front by requiring a limited time of involvement by the PEO. This limit on the time period of the PEO satisfies what America's strategic culture calls for -- quick success. By refuting the need for perseverance, our policy places an unrealistic constraint on those responsible for conducting the PEO.

Conclusions

As the sole superpower in the world, the US can employ MOOTW as a part of its "Pax Americana" approach to regional conflicts. Such operations have become the "coin of the realm" in some leaders' minds, but even as such it has limited uses and cannot be overspent. If the US intends to retain the ability to fight and win its nation's war, and possess the ability to conduct the full range of peace operations, several changes must occur.

Therefore, what should we do to maintain the viability of peace enforcement operations as a tool of national power? Most important, policy makers must understand the nature of the conflict with which they are concerned before implementing a PEO. Placing US forces in combat, however limited in intent, without

adequately understanding the basis of the conflict can lead to the unintended overcommitment of the nation.

Conducting a PEO is not a police action intended to settle a neighborhood brawl, it is an act implementing foreign policy. Calls for the formation of "peace operations" brigades organized for the sole use of conducting such operations are just wishful thinking by those who fail to appreciate the inherent dangers of applying national power to modern conflict. The Marine Corps' experience in conducting "small wars" during the 1920s is instructive in its recognition of the necessity of using all elements of national power, especially the diplomatic element. Our current doctrine needs to reinforce this lesson by incorporating the mutually supporting actions of military and diplomatic elements of national power.

An established process effectively used by an interagency working group is an absolute necessity to achieve national objectives without slipping into a mid-intensity conflict or wallowing in a gradually escalating intervention. The group must use windows of opportunity as they appear, otherwise regional stability and peace will escape us.

This intricate application of power requires the process be in place before the need for applying that power arises. The executive branch of our government is responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs and executing its supporting policy. Therefore, it must establish the process to assess the situation, plan the PEO, organize the necessary response, allocate

resources, monitor progress, and report back to the National Command Authorities. Our policy makers must use all sources of strength to create a positive aim for the PEO.

The unique nature of intrastate conflict demands that we identify new goals for conflict termination. Seizing ground, destroying belligerent forces, or gaining time, our traditional standards, are no longer appropriate in and by themselves. The major objective of peace enforcement operations is a settlement, not a victory. All belligerents must realize there is more to gain from the diplomatic and economic aspects of peace than from war. This goal exceeds the ability of a military force to achieve. The US must mobilize all facets of its national power, especially diplomatic and economic, to reach a settlement in a PEO's most likely setting, a failed state.

One facet of Clausewitz's theory that remains is the question concerning the utility of his concept of the center of gravity in a PEO setting. Defined as the "hub of all power and movement on which everything depends," it identifies the source of strength of military forces.⁴⁰ When Clausewitz wrote of this concept, international relations were much more elementary than they are now and the concept of centers of gravity only addressed the military element of power. Today, multiple centers of gravity exist at the strategic level in a complex problem like a PEO, one for each element of national power (diplomatic, economic, military, and informational). By identifying the centers of gravity for each belligerent's elements of power the

US can more effectively bring its strength to bear on them, degrade them, and bend them to our will.

Peace enforcement in an intrastate conflict means a collision between the primordial violent passions of a failed state's peoples and both the rational thought and opportunism of a peace force's leadership and military. Ideally, the passion of the peace force's people should closely match the passion of the people of the failed state if the peace enforcers are to have the necessary domestic support for what will be a long operation. However, if such passions are strong in the peace force's people, it may not be politically possible for the leaders to order its force to depart the failed state if the operation exceeds its culminating point.

Peace enforcement operations are new situations for our nation to face. Indeed, in the words of one scholar, it is "a very new enterprise to be examined and embraced only with all due caution."⁴¹ The implications for our two MRC strategy are great. At what point does a PEO, with all of its attending force structure, become a MRC? Can we realistically expect to withdraw forces from a PEO when a MRC arises, as PDD 25 suggests? Placing our young men and women in harm's way requires nothing less than a complete understanding by our leaders of the nature of intrastate conflict, peace enforcement operations, and the possible costs incurred to attain our ends.

ENDNOTES

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